3:Lewis E-5 (1943-1957) 1960
NU37 Tepoztlan NU37

fewer than thirty Tepoztecans were *braceros*—that is, temporary agricultural workers in the United States; by 1957, over six hundred men had been *braceros* for periods that varied from forty-five days to over a year. This occupational change has made for other great changes in the village. In 1943, Tepoztlán suffered from an acute land shortage. Now, because in many cases the *braceros* return to the village only to rest a few months before setting out for another period in the United States, it suffers from a shortage of manpower, and many *milpas* go uncultivated. The *braceros* earn more in some months in the United States than they could earn in almost two years in the village, and many of them have invested their savings in improvements for their houses and in land and cattle. Many have brought home portable radios, mechanical toys, clothing, and cloth—the village now has four full-time tailors who are kept busy providing tailor-made pants for the villagers. Although the *bracero* movement has broadened the perspective of some Tepoztecans, who now greet American visitors with a few words of English, most of the *braceros* are isolated in work camps or on farms, speak no English, live on a Mexican diet, and on the whole learn little about the United States and its way of life. Very few learn agricultural skills that can be applied in the village.

Most of the *braceros* from Tepoztlán are young men between the ages of twenty and thirty. They come predominantly from the upper segments of the lower economic group (Group I), but also from the middle group II (see p. 37), few come from the poorest families and fewer from the wealthiest families of Group III. This is an interesting change from the pattern in the early thirties when only individuals with special connections and with adequate capital of the village became leaders. In the case of the *braceros* it is not the village but a labor agency in each of the participating states that selects the workers. In Morelos the agency is the Secretaría de Agricultura y Ganadería (Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock), the principal government development agency in charge of the private sector and in fact the leader of a local political party. The agency sends to Tepoztlán and the other municipios of the state a recruiting team which visits each village in turn. The team includes a medical doctor to see to it that the healthy villagers become a bracero recruit (usually called *enganchado*). He has been a literate himself and knows how to make the necessary legal arrangements. Tepoztlán men paid him a fee in the hope that he would get them longer contracts and also take them to California rather than to Texas or Arkansas. The fee, which the agency purportedly shared with government authorities, ranged from 200 to 400 pesos depending on the length of time of work specified in the contract. Most of the villagers who signed up had to borrow from local money lenders at the usual high rate of interest but they had avoided having to deal directly with the authorities and so had found the courage to take the initial step.

The *bracero* movement has served as a partial though temporary solution of the agrarian problem in the village. Tepoztlán has become dependent on the United States economy. Were the United States suddenly to close its borders to Mexican *braceros*, there would probably be a crisis both in the village and in the nation.

Another important change in Tepoztecans is their greater readiness to sell their land. In 1943, it was difficult to find anyone in the village who would consider selling a homesite or an agricultural plot. For example, in 1943 a

3:Lewis E-5 (1943-1957) 1960
NU37 Tepoztlan NU37

leading Mexican banker who wanted to build a home in the village negotiated for over a year before he succeeded in buying a modest-sized tile plot of land whose owner was living in Mexico City. By 1956, Tepoztecans had sold almost forty plots to as many outsiders for building homes in the village and in the lovely valley below. Tepoztecan middlemen are now speculating in land because of the steadily rising prices. A village site valued at about 50 centavos per square meter in 1943 sold in 1957 for as much as 12 pesos a meter (166 centavos to the peso).

Tepoztlán has become an international tourist colony. The non-Tepotecan home owners now include native Mexicans, naturalized Mexican citizens of Spanish, French, German, Dutch, Japanese, and Italian ancestry, and a few Americans. Few of these people live in the village the year around but spend their holidays and vacations there. The construction of thirty-five new homes for the foreign colony has given employment to some Tepotecan masons and day laborers. Some of the building materials—stone, sand, and tiles—also have been purchased locally. A number of the families have taken Tepotecan girls as domestic servants both in the village and in their Mexico City or United States homes, and about a dozen Tepotecans have jobs as caretakers. The colony also provides some additional income to local meat and milk dealers and other merchants. On the whole, the "foreigners" form few friendships in the village and except for the Carnival participate very little in village affairs. It is said that most of the outsiders opposed the campaign to bring electricity to Tepoztlán for fear that it might spoil the primitive rustic quality of the village. It should be noted that among the non-Tepotecans who have built in the village are some of Mexico's leading intellectuals and artists and a few leading figures of other walks of life. Many visitors to the village and their larger share of those who have built a home in the village are [illegible]

[illegible]

Since 1936, educational facilities have been expanded in the village. Two new schools built in the larger barrios gave the village a total of four elementary schools. Attendance rose from about 250 in 1930 to over 500 in 1936. In 1939, a high school was completed, and attendance rose from 24 in the first year to 110 in 1956. Boys still predominate over girls in both elementary and high schools. The surrounding villages have begun to reach out for higher education and now send their children to the central high school in Tepoztlán. Each year a number of Tepotecan high-school graduates go on to the university in Mexico City.

In the past ten years bus travel to Cuernavaca has almost doubled and travel to Mexico City also has increased. On an average week day approximately 300 Tepotecans take the bus to Cuernavaca to work, shop, study, sell produce, and to find recreation. Some of the peasants now think it worthwhile to take the bus to their milpas, a distance of two or three kilometers, rather